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Message Text

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71
ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 ISO-00 AID-20 CIAE-00 COME-00 FRB-02

INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 TRSE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12 SPC-03

CIEP-02 LAB-06 SIL-01 OMB-01 AGR-20 DRC-01 /114 W
---------- 062080
R 252152Z SEP 73
FM AMCONSUL BELIZE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3170

UNCLAS BELIZE 543

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, BH
SUBJECT: US INVESTOR INTEREST: CATTLE RANCHING

REF: STATE 190070

1. WE WILL OF COURSE BE DELIGHTED TO RECEIVE WOZENCROFT ON OCTOBER 2. BELIZEAN OFFICIALS ARE FRIENDLY AND ACCESSIBLE, SO WE ANTICIPATE NO TROUBLE IN MAKING APPOINTMENTS WITH APPROPRIATE PEOPLE. HOWEVER, WOZENCROFT MOST LIKELY WILL HAVE TO TRAVEL TO BELMOPAN TO MEET WITH THEM. BEFORE FINALIZING HIS PLANS WE BELIEVE THAT HE SHOULD CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

A. THE GOB DOES NOT ALLOW THE EXPORT OF CATTLE, ESPECIALLY OF FEMALES, EXCEPT UNDER EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES. THE IDEA BEHIND THIS LEGISLATION IS TO PROMOTE THE INCREASE OF THE NATIONAL HERD, BUT BECAUSE OF THE LOW PRICES PAID FOR BREED AND SLAUGHTERHOUSE STOCK LOCALLY, ITS EFFECT HAS BEEN TO DAMPEN HERD EXPANSION.

B. THE REASON FOR THE LOW PRICES PAID LOCALLY IS THAT THE GOB CONTROLS THE PRICE OF CATTLE. THE TOP PRICE FOR 1,000 LB. PLUS HEIFER IS US DOLS 0.22 A POUND DELIVERED.

C. THE COST OF ACQUIRING LAND HERE APPEARS INITIALLY ATTRACTIVE, VARYING ANYWHERE FROM US DOLS 10 - US DOLS 150 AN ACRE.
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HOWEVER, ALMOST ALL OF IT IS IN BUSH, REQUIRING EXPENSIVE CLEARING,

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DRAINING AND SEEDING. IN EFFECT THE REAL COST OF LAND HERE IS NOT REMARKABLY LOWER THAN IN THE U.S.

D. THE GOB APPEARS TO BE IN THE PROCESS OF RE-EXAMINING ITS LAND HOLDING POLICY. WHILE THE RESULTS OF THIS EXAMINATION ARE NOT YET CLEAR, ONE COULD SAFELY SAY THAT IT WILL BECOME MORE DIFFICULT FOR FOREIGNERS TO OWN LAND HERE IN THE FUTURE. THE GOB SEEMS DETERMINED TO CURB "THE SPECULATION IN LAND" WHICH HAS PERMITTED FOREIGNERS TO OWN LARGE TRACTS OF LAND WITHOUT RESTRAINT IN THE PAST.

2. IF WOZENCROFT STILL WANTS TO VISIT BELIZE, WE CAN ARRANGE APPOINTMENTS WITH APPROPRIATE OFFICIALS IN THE MINISTRIES OF AGRICULTURE AND TRADE AND INDUSTRY AT THE PERMANENT SECRETARY AND MINISTERIAL LEVEL. WE WOULD APPRICIATE THE DEPARTMENT'S ADVISE ON HIS ETA BY CABLE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. WOLLAM

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